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SUBJECT: CHILE-U.S. JOINT COMMISSION ON SCIENCE &
TECHNOLOGY, MAY 9-10

¶1. Summary. The U.S. and Chile held a Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) on Science and Technology in Santiago from May 9-10. This was the second JCM held under the original scientific cooperation agreement, which was signed in 1992. A 20-member USG delegation was led by OES Assistant Secretary Claudia McMurray. The Government of Chile (GOC) used the JCM to highlight its emphasis on science and technology as a means to diversify and grow its economy. Both delegations agreed to add women in science as a new agenda item to the JCM. End Summary.

¶2. The U.S. and Chile signed a basic science and technology cooperation agreement in 1992, which has now been extended to ¶2011. The GOC hosted the second Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) on Science and Technology in Santiago May 9-10. (Note: The U.S. hosted the first JCM in Washington in January 2004). Assistant Secretary Claudia McMurray of the Bureau of Oceans, Environment and Science (OES) headed the 20-member USG delegation, which included members from the Department of Defense, National Science Foundation, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Geological Service and Embassy Santiago. The 40-member GOC delegation was led by Ambassador Gabriel Rodriguez who heads the newly-created office of Energy, Science, Technology and Innovation at the Chilean MFA. The GOC delegation included official representatives from Chile's space agency, agriculture and mining ministries, national commission for science and technology, science academy, as well as academics from several universities.

¶3. Rodriguez opened the JCM by laying out the GOC's broad vision of how to foster science and technology. He said the main challenge is institutional, i.e. designing new Chilean institutions to meld economic development with enhanced research and development. Chile wants to move beyond an economy that is based on commodities and develop knowledge-based sectors. In more concrete terms, the GOC wants to use science and technology to foster economic growth that will double per capita income in 15 years, to the point that Chile enters the ranks of the developed world. GOC leaders have determined that one way to achieve this would be to leverage its international trade network and build "strategic associations". These would create long-term relationships that will foster a culture of innovation, with

science and technology as its bedrock.

¶4. Rodriguez continued that the next "innovation wave" for Chile will be in biotechnology and life sciences. The GOC's new strategic mandate is to position itself in niche markets by: (1) developing human capital through international graduate study exchanges in science and engineering, especially with the United States; (2) building up the national information and communication technology infrastructure through regional and local innovation; and (3) promoting international partnerships and high-tech investment on common projects. Rodriguez said the GOC already has a number of key agencies working on innovation: the National Council of Innovation for Competitiveness (Chile ranks 27 of 125 countries listed on OECD's Competitive Index, leading Latin America and the Caribbean), the National Council for Science and Technology (CONICYT), the Development Organization for Science, Technology and Innovation (CORFO), and the Ministry of Agriculture. Chile also boasts solid universities and national research centers, which, however, need to be more connected to the private sector.

¶5. The bulk of the JCM was held at the working group level, with alternating presentations from attending U.S. and Chilean agencies. Topics covered climate change, energy, natural disasters, biotechnology for agriculture and health, astronomy, biodiversity, oceanography, fisheries, geology, information and communications technology, women in science, and education. Many of the USG agencies represented at the JCM already interact regularly with their Chilean counterparts. The GOC's main goal in hosting the JCM was to educate a broad array of GOC agencies outside the MFA on the depth and breadth of U.S.-Chile cooperation on science and technology. In general, the GOC expressed its strong

interest in broadening academic exchanges with the U.S. in science and math. This includes adding additional scholarships paid by the GOC to send up to 100 Chilean graduate students to the U.S. in these fields annually.

¶6. At the conclusion of the formal JCM on May 10, the U.S. and Chile released a joint press statement emphasizing the link between continued bilateral collaboration on science and technology and sustainable economic growth. The joint statement also highlighted groundbreaking U.S.-Chile research in climate science that will commence in 2008 and seek to fill data gaps concerning the impact of greenhouse gas emissions on the South East Pacific Region.

¶7. Both the U.S. and Chilean delegations lauded the addition of women in science as a new agenda item for the Joint Commission and will seek ways to foster participation of women in scientific fields in both countries. To this end, OES A/S McMurray hosted a roundtable discussion at the American Academy of Science on May 11 to discuss practical ways to achieve this goal. The roundtable was co-hosted by Executive Director Vivian Heyl of the National Commission for Science and Technology (CONICYT).

¶8. Comment. The Joint Commission and its attendant meetings usefully reviewed the on-going U.S.-Chile dialogue on the environment, science, and technology (EST). Chile's attitudes towards EST continue to evolve. The three-year old U.S.-Chile Free Trade Agreement had a strong (and funded) environmental chapter, which has helped encourage the GOC to begin setting up an independent Ministry of the Environment. The Bachelet administration talks often about the link between science and technology and sustained economic growth.

So at this point, the GOC is saying all the right things on science and economic growth. How to create the links that make that link reality is a bigger challenge in Chile than outside observers might conclude. A conservative business sector and commodity-based economy will require real incentives. To that end, Chile is eager and ready to deepen bilateral ties with the U.S. in scientific fields. We will continue to do all to work towards that goal.

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